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ABSTRACT

This booklet describes nine "new currents" in education with the recommendation that local and state federations of the American Federation of Teachers create QuEST committees of teachers to study the implications of all these issues and develop statements and QuEST action programs on them as they relate to local and state situations. The issues are 1) Verticalism--the creation of various educational rankings which affect authority and decision making in schools; 2) Merit Pay (new style)--based on "output factors" as opposed to "input factors"; 3) Accountability--the shifting of primary learning responsibility from the student to the school; 4) Behavioral Objectives--statement of school outcomes in terms of overt, observable actions of learners which are to change as a consequence of instruction; 5) PPBS (Planning Program Budgeting Systems)--a systems analysis method for reporting district expenditures; 6) Performance Certification--based on specific competencies of individual students, as opposed to credit counting or program approval; 7) Educational Engineering--a total process for managing environmental and institutional changes; 8) Performance Contracting--between schools and private firms to remove educational deficiencies on a guaranteed performance basis; 9) Voucher Systems--for financing education through payments to parents who then select the school for their child. (JS)

ED043560

AFT

QuEST PAPER

ON NEW CURRENTS
IN EDUCATION

OCCASIONAL PAPERS FROM
THE AFT PROGRAM FOR
QUALITY EDUCATIONAL
STANDARDS IN TEACHING
(QuEST)

SP004180

WHAT IS THE AFT-*QuEST* PROGRAM?

Persistent and emerging problems face the nation's schools:

Effective teaching
Use of paraprofessionals
Decentralization and community control
Teacher education and certification
Implementation of the More Effective Schools concept
Eradicating racism in education

As the teacher revolution sweeps through urban America, the American Federation of Teachers becomes increasingly aware of its special responsibilities to offer solutions to these other problems. In January, 1968, the AFT's executive council, with representatives on it from most of the nation's big cities, held a special two-day conference to consider these problems and the AFT's responsibilities.

Out of this conference came a mandate for a *continuing body of active and concerned AFT educators* who could—

Anticipate some of the emerging problems resulting from the rapid social changes in our society;

Meet on a regular basis;

Stimulate and initiate confrontations between teachers and these problems at state, local, and national levels;

Organize and coordinate regional and national conferences;

Prepare tentative positions for action by AFT legislative bodies; and

Suggest action programs to implement their findings.

Thus was born QuEST.

Reports on QuEST conferences and other mainly descriptive topics are published regularly in a QuEST Reports series. Background papers on topics of current educational concern are available in a QuEST Papers series; these are *not* AFT position papers, but are intended to stimulate ideas which could lead to programs.

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ED043569

NEW CURRENTS IN EDUCATION: A PRELIMINARY REVIEW

by Dr. Robert D. Bhaerman
Director of Research, AFT
August, 1970

In QuEST Paper #9, *Needed: A Conceptual Framework for Collective Bargaining in Education*, published last fall, we highlighted what appears to be two major trends in education: (1) the attempts to restructure the profession and (2) the corresponding movement toward redefining the conception of the teacher. Five contributing factors were discussed: levels of certification, differentiated staffing, career ladders/lattices, merit pay, and the USOE's Education Professions Development Act. The paper concluded with the following call to action:

> . . . now we must *organize;* organize local and state QuEST committees in order to build the needed expertise in the areas toward which we must move in collective bargaining: inservice education; certification; staffing patterns; governance of the profession. The need to establish such committees is urgent, for such things as differentiated staffing and merit pay will not wait. We must be ready first with a comprehensive, well-conceived program, a conceptual *framework of reference* upon which to structure *our* profession and define *our* role in it.

If this was salient in 1969, it is even more so now. For in the last year there has emerged a number of "new currents" in education. While many were present in the last few years of the past decade, their promise for the 1970's has gained new force. In addition to the "advocacy" of the United States Office of Education, these currents are being stirred by the business and industrial complex who see looming before them larger quantities of green folding stuff. This is motivation enough to make many an industrialist look like Horace Mann himself.

The original analysis in QuEST Paper #9 still holds, I believe; but I would now add these "new currents" which supplement the previous ones:

Verticalism
Merit Pay--New Style
Accountability
Behavioral Objectives
PPBS
Performance-based Certification
Educational Engineering
Performance Contracting
Voucher Systems

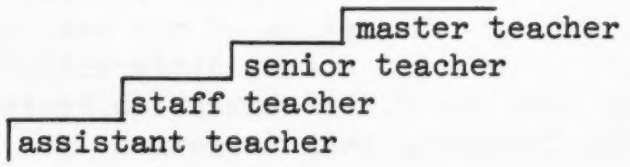
They all are woven together both directly and indirectly; a great deal of overlapping exists among them.

The point is this: We can no longer *merely* talk about these things. They are fast moving "currents", and we don't need another Hurricane Camille!

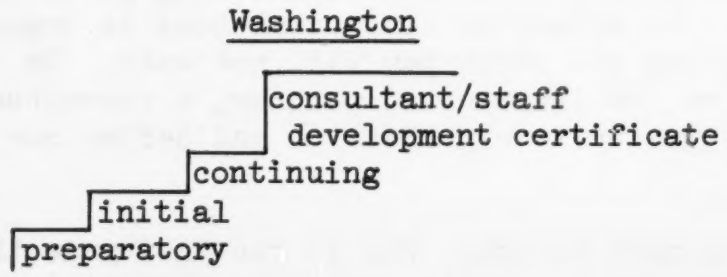
Recommendation: That each local and state federation of the American Federation of Teachers creates, *this year,* a QuEST committee of rank-and-file teachers

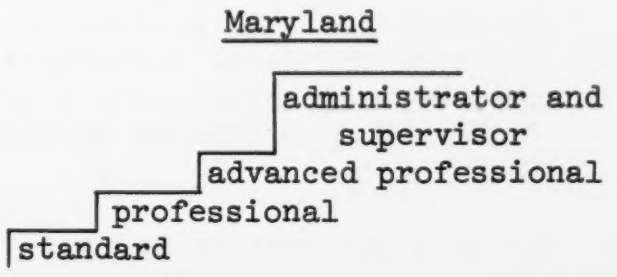
which will begin to (1) study the implications of all these issues as they effect their students, their community, and their schools *and* (2) develop statements and QuEST action programs on these issues as they relate to local and state situations. It is no longer urgent for us to do this. It is past that stage.

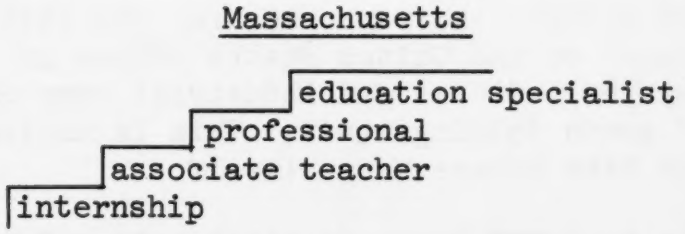
(1) *Verticalism.* An effort is underway to create educational rankings of various kinds. And they are related not solely to differentiated staffing with which we are all familiar. The Temple City (California) differentiated staffing model has been widely reproduced, adopted, and in some cases, adapted.



In addition, vertical patterns of teacher certification are in various stages of implementation in a number of states, i.e.,







The implications go deeper than merely the creation of certification or differentiated salary hierarchies. The "concept of verticalism" implies these, and more: How would the installation of vertical hierarchies affect *authority* and *decision making* in the schools? How would they affect the *status* of teachers?

(2) *Merit Pay--New Style.* Part of the concept of verticalism is the issue of merit pay. I do not believe we need to be especially concerned with the "old style", i.e., in which rating scales were devised to assess such "input factors" as:

- teaching quality, ethical and professional behavior, cooperation with other staff, 'extra-mile' service (Barrington, Illinois).
- personal qualities, professional growth, evidences of superior teaching (Ladue, Missouri).
- classroom effectiveness, school effectiveness, community participation, professional activities (Rich Township, Illinois).

The "old" approach is still utilized to some extent, but hardly enough to be concerned with (unless you happen to teach in one of the districts).

Approximately 130 school systems in the country use this approach, but since there are nearly 20,000 systems, the percentage is infinitesimally small (less than 1%). Furthermore, those districts are basically small, wealthy, suburban types, e.g., Barrington, Illinois; Ladue, Missouri; Rich Township in Park Forest, Illinois; New Trier in Winnetka, Illinois; Milford, New Hampshire; Marblehead, Massachusetts. I do not believe we need to be overly concerned with this approach in Chicago, New York City, Philadelphia, and other large cities.

The "new style" is something else. It is based on "output factors" such as introduced by the school administration in Gary, Indiana. The "criteria of success" in that plan, in part, is "mean class achievement in areas of instruction for the current year." The "predicator variables for the individual class unit achievement" are:

-Mean class achievement for previous year.

-Class size.

-Percentage of girls in class.

-Percentage of indigent children in class as determined by welfare rolls, etc.

-Class mean I.Q.

-Percent student turn-over for class.

-Percent teacher turn-over for school.

-Years of teaching experience including the present year.

-Years of teaching experience in subject area or grade level including the present year.

-Credit hours earned in graduate work.

-Credit earned in subject-matter area.

-Class absentee rate.

-Percent of repeaters in class.

-Rating of adequacy of learning environment; i.e., rental facilities, portables, basements, etc.

-Rating of the effectiveness of supervisory assistance received by the teacher.

In short, an attempt would be made to predict achievement and determine teacher effectiveness on the basis of assessing the extent to which students actually did achieve. Elaborate statistical devices would be used to quantify teacher effectiveness.

(3) *Accountability.* The Associate Commissioner for Education Personnel Development in the USOE has written that "accountability" is well on its way to becoming the new "in" word in education, replacing "relevance." He (Don Davies) stated that accountability means that the primary learning responsibility is shifted from the student to the school. According to Davies, accountability links student performance with teacher performance, implies precise educational goals, and forecasts the measurement of achievement. He adds that "it also means a lot of people are going to be shaken up."

Leon Lessinger, formerly of the USOE and now president of the Education Audit Institute in Washington, D.C., is acknowledged as one of the leading advocates of accountability. The main points he makes on the topic are:

-Accountability deals essentially with the effective use of funds . . . and with student accomplishment

-The notion is that we establish goals, a set of promises and "promise to deliver on them"

-Accountability deals with the extent to which we deliver these promises

-Accountability relates to performance and the review of performance

-The idea is that teaching *and* learning are now often "independent" of each other, but they should not be

-Learning should be a result of teaching

-Focus on something which can be observed, i.e., what students can do

-Need for an external, outside review, feedback an independent accomplishment audit

-Rely on other modes of proof than standardized tests: sworn statements, testimony, hearings, jury, petition, expert witnesses, certified educational auditors

-Implications: incentives (both status and money), use of developmental capital, and performance contracting.

A number of AFT locals have moved to fashion a position on the issue. As is well known, Local #2 (UFT in New York City) has negotiated the following clause in its most recent contract:

> The Board of Education and the union recognize that the major problem of our school system is the failure to educate *all* of our students and the massive academic retardation which exists especially among minority group students. The board and the union therefore agree to join in an effort, in cooperation with universities, community school boards and parent organizations, to seek solutions to this major problem and to develop objective criteria of professional accountability.

In addition, President William Simons of Local #6 raises five meaningful questions on accountability:

-For what are teachers accountable?

-Is there a chain of accountability or is it one person's responsibility?

-If agreement can be reached on "what", then the question is "to whom"? Parents and community-at-large? And, in turn, are they accountable? And to whom?

-What role does accountability play in the evaluation of teachers?

-What is the degree of accountability? What will be accepted?

(4) *Behavioral Objectives.* As diverse pressures to evaluate the "output" of the schools mount, and they are certain to increase, educators are attempting to select procedures for properly assessing the impact of school programs. In their search, some have fastened on the "behavioral objectives" movement. Behavioral objectives, performance objectives, and measurable objectives are synonymous for school outcomes stated in terms of those overt, observable actions of learners which are to change as a consequence of instruction.

Miles Myers, a vice-president of the California Federation of Teachers, writing in the May 1970 issue of the *California Teacher,* defines a number of the terms currently being used:

Goal means a statement of broad direction, general purpose or intent. A goal is general and timeless and not concerned with a particular achievement within a specified time period.

Objective means a desired accomplishment which can be measured within a given time and under specifiable conditions. The attainment of an objective advances the school system toward corresponding goals. "Performance" or "behavioral" objectives focus on what the learner is to know, be able to do, or will demonstrate as a consequence of instruction, the important conditions under which he will perform, and the level of acceptable performance.

Assessment means a statement explaining how a school system's output compares with input.

Evaluation examines the appropriateness of goals, objectives, personnel, teaching methods, etc.

Myers does an excellent job in summarizing what the debate is all about in this fashion:

ATTACK: The trivial learner behaviors are the easiest to measure. Thus, behavioral objectives ignore the important goals of education.

RESPONSE: The truth is that the behavioral objective requires the teacher to be very explicit about what he is doing, revealing much trifling nonsense in vague objectives and focusing attention on really important outcomes.

ATTACK: Teaching to behavioral objectives would either make spontaneous student involvement impossible or distort the student involvement by forcing it into a prespecified framework.

RESPONSE: What teachers call spontaneous student involvement is often only a temporary diversion, ephemeral entertainment, leading to no relevant outcome. The essential framework into which student involvement must be forced is a worthwhile objective for the instructional program.

ATTACK: Many of the valuable results of good teaching never reveal themselves immediately, within a time span allowing for measurement. To focus on the behavioral objective is to encourage attention to innocuous outcomes and reinforce the already-systematized public school system.

RESPONSE: Much of what is going on in school is indefensible. On that point we agree. But to then argue that most of what is valuable cannot be realistically measured is to proclaim that what is nonsense and what is not cannot be objectively determined. We must quit hiding behind "defenses of generality" and become accountable for what we do.

L. B. Strain of the San Diego school system, in the April 1970 issue of the *Journal of Secondary Education*, also highlights a number of issues to which behavioral objectives are related:

The crescendo attending use of behavioral objectives for remedying educational ills is becoming increasingly audible. In California, the present movement toward PPBS as a basis for educational funding is giving impetus to the importance of developing program and instructional objectives. Educational accountability with respect to showing value for money spent and results for time utilized is becoming a real and an immediate concern. . . . A subtle implication in many of these movements is that objectives stated in behavioral or performance terms can lift education from its characteristic depths of vagueness and imprecision to heights of clear definition and precise results.

(5) *PPBS*. Closely related to behavioral objectives is the movement toward Planning Program Budgeting Systems. Again, Myers does a good job in summarizing the issue in his article referred to above:

PPBS is essentially a different method for reporting district expenditures. The old or present system has a large category called certificated personnel, another category called classified personnel, another titled textbooks. Critics of the present budget system say that no one can tell what programs the money is being spent for and how the results (output) compare with investment (input). PPBS is a budget system that states anticipated results (output or objectives) and money spent on specific programs (a budget category called English or Language Arts replacing such general categories as textbooks and instructional materials). Thus, districts using the budget must first plan (objectives or output), program (activities and services to achieve objectives), budget (amount spent on specific programs), and evaluate (cost effectiveness). These steps are sometimes labeled *Systems Analysis*.

(6) *Performance-based Certification.* Three stages in the history of teacher certification can be discerned: (1) credit counting, (2) program approval, and (3) the current movement toward performance-based certification. This movement has started in several states. The state of Washington appears to be taking the lead. However, in May, 1970 the USOE sponsored a Training Session on Performance-based Teacher Certification in which Washington and ten other states were invited (California, Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Texas, Utah) as well as seven organizations including the AFT (American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, Association of Classroom Teachers, Association of Student Teachers now called the Association of Teacher Educators, American Vocational Association, and the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards). The sessions focused upon factors which tend to encourage and those which tend to inhibit performance-based approaches to certification.

Some background on this issue: Traditionally, the way of trying to describe minimum standards of competence for entry into teaching has been by *counting the number of semester hours of college credit* (*stage* 1) earned in specific kinds of courses. However, since time spent sitting in a classroom does not guarantee that students learn and since two courses with identical titles may have nothing in common other than the title, credit counting does not insure uniform standards. The accumulation of college credits or degrees is not a guarantee of competency. Therefore, the rationale is that a more logical way to check on the education of a future teacher is to attempt to determine whether the pre-service experiences provided are of quality, that is, to assess each teaching program before the prospective teacher passes through it. If the program appears to be satisfactory, then one who takes it can be "automatically" certificated without having to submit his credits for counting. The institution identifies a student as a graduate of the program and recommends him to the state certification agency. This approach, *program approval* (*stage* 2), is used by many state departments of education. Whereas transcript analysis merely assesses quantity, program approval attempts to make a determination of the quality of the total program, including general education, professional education, and student teaching.

The program approval approach is not without its weaknesses. For example, while there is little apparent relationship between collecting credits and teacher competency, it is not at all certain that there is a significant relationship between program approval and teacher competency either. The important question then becomes, *Is a student who passes through an approved program better prepared than one who merely had his credits counted?* Theoretically he should be, but often he is not. Therefore, attention has been turned to the assessment of specific competencies of individual students. This is why some states are attempting to move to what is considered the third stage of certification. It would seem ideal--if it could be done. But evaluation of teachers is a two-edged sword. How it is used, by whom, and *to what end* are the important questions. The trouble is that evaluation is complicated enough when it deals with *initial* certification. *It is doubly so when the concept of verticalism is injected: advanced certification, certification levels and ladders, and certification renewal.* Another unresolved issue is whether performance criteria would be based upon *teaching behavior* (what the teacher knows and can *do*), the *products* that derive from the behavior (specified pupil outcomes) or, somehow, both.

(7) *Educational Engineering.* Leon Lessinger has been one of the first persons to use the term "educational engineering." He does so in this context, by first establishing four goals:

> -Within planned budgetary levels, establish higher standards of efficiency in the use of Federal dollars in education;
>
> -By a three stage funding pattern, introduce incentive structures into the public schools;
>
> -Through the adoption of new managerial techniques, guarantee the surest and purest form of compensatory education--no longer merely "equality of opportunity"; rather, "equity of results";
>
> -With prescriptive rather than proscriptive policies, allow local authorities to solve the problem of desegregation, tax payer revolts, etc. in an educationally sound and politically palatable manner.

And then:

> The concept behind this new posture is educational engineering, which is a total process for managing environmental and institutional changes to increase educational productivity and promote self-renewal while adhering to local, humane values.

His four major components of educational engineering are:

> *Performance Contracting,* whereby a school contracts with private firms, chosen competitively, to remove educational deficiencies on a guaranteed performance basis or suffer penalties. Without being told what program is to be used, the contractor is encouraged to innovate in a responsible manner. Upon successful demonstration, the contractor's program is adopted by the school on a turnkey basis, i.e., a process wherein local teachers and administrators are trained to take over the program.
>
> *The Independent Educational Accomplishment Audit,* which ensures accountability for results. An independent educational auditor objectively evaluates the operation of the program and certifies that the claimed educational results have been accomplished. The IEAA's report is made public, thereby creating the demand for performance-based educational programs.
>
> *Management Support Groups,* which act as a catalyst for reform; a political buffer in experimentation, a communications link between Federal priorities and local program development; an honest broker between industry and the school; and a supplier of technical assistance, ranging from program development to turnkey assistance.
>
> *Developmental Capital,* which is a systematic funding process of three stages: planning grants for program development; grants for program operation; evaluation-turnkey grants for program adaption, adoption, and installation.

(8) *Performance Contracting.* Performance contract, defined above, is one of the hottest items in education. The Education Turnkey Systems, Inc. *Newsletter* reports that the Dallas, Texas, school district is preparing a performance contract proposal focusing on math, reading and communications, achievement motivation, and occupational training; a novel aspect of their plan is that teachers will be allowed to compete with contractors and may receive "mini-grants" for developing projects. Detroit has prepared plans for a dropout prevention project in five inner-city junior high schools; the program calls for performance guarantees in ninth-grade math, reading, and achievement motivation. Portland, Oregon schools are approaching performance contracting in two ways: The Martin Luther King Elementary School is rewarding teachers for students' performance; teams of teachers contract with the city's model school program to conduct a reading program. Each team receives a $1,000 stipend and competes with other teams for bonuses for teaching success. Teachers use the money to employ aides and improve the educational program in other ways. Portland's Boise Elementary School has a contract with Audio-Visual, Inc., for guaranteed performance of teaching machines in reading instruction. The San Diego public schools have approved a $1.4 million contract with Educational Development Laboratories to raise reading achievement. The company, a division of McGraw Hill, guaranteed to improve the language skills of 9,600 minority group students, providing a variety of instructional material, in-service training for teachers and consulting services.

The most noted performance contracting scheme to date is the Texarkana (Arkansas) Project. The Texarkana plan draws private industry into the classroom as teacher. The goal is to improve the reading, math, and study skills of a pilot group of under-achievers, 200 in the present year. Beginning with a group of 9th-graders, the plan is to include five hundred youngsters over the next five years in grades 7 through 12. The company conducting the experiment is to be held responsible for the students' improvement according to a carefully spelled-out contract.

Financed by a $250,000 USOE grant, the bidding began in the summer of 1969. Dorsett Educational Systems won over such companies as McGraw-Hill, Westinghouse, and I.B.M. Here are some of the terms of the agreement: (1) Students from low-income families who are two or more grades below standard in the basic skills will receive special training for up to three hours per day. (2) Present school personnel will be used by the contractor so that the program, if successful, can be carried on after the project is terminated. (3) The contractor will be paid only on the basis of a stipulated amount of money for each student who successfully completes the program, with a penalty being assessed the contractor for each failure. (4) If, six months after the termination of the project, school officials find that student performance is not up to a specified level, a penalty may be assessed. (5) The school system, not the contractor, selects the students.

Specifically the contract is spelled out so that a student's reading skills, for example, must improve one grade level for every eighty hours of instruction. If the student progresses on schedule, Dorsett receives $80. If he improves at a greater rate, Dorsett receives an additional $27. If he progresses at a slower rate, Dorsett forfeits $22. A point to note is that the students involved are two or more grade levels behind, and so the company could conceivably make money without the student achieving his proper grade

level. No new criteria as to grade level are being devised for the program; students' levels are judged on the basis of national tests traditionally used by the Texarkana schools.

(9) *Voucher Systems.* Financing education through voucher payments to parents is one of the goals of the Center for the Study of Public Policy (in Cambridge, Massachusetts). Under the plan parents of a school-age child would receive a voucher worth the amount of the per-pupil expenditure of public schools in the area. Parents would select the school for their child and the school would cash in the voucher with the government.

The report of the Center on the voucher plan cautions that economic incentives, such as additional payments to schools for taking the most disadvantaged children, would be necessary to give poor students a reasonable chance of getting into the school of their choice. As a safeguard, schools with an abundance of applicants would be required to select at least half their students by lottery. The report says a voucher system would also have to pay transportation costs in addition to the basic voucher and would have to provide parents with enough information about available schools so they could make an intelligent selection. A governing Educational Voucher Agency (EVA), either a board of education or a new, appointed or elected board would be expected to provide information to "facilitate comparison of schools with one another" and to make certain that schools represent themselves accurately.

The report states that a voucher system would improve education by making schools more responsive to children's needs and by stimulating the creation of new kinds of schools. To test its theories, the report recommends that the Office of Economic Opportunity, which is paying for the $196,000 study, fund a demonstration project lasting from five to eight years. The report suggests that the experiment include 12,000 elementary school children of various races and social classes. The Center estimates the annual cost of the demonstration at $6-8 million.

The report also admits that "an unregulated voucher system could be the most serious setback for the education of disadvantaged children in the history of the United States." It would redistribute sources away from the poor and "exacerbate the problems of existing public schools without offering them any offsetting advantages." The report implies that the future of the voucher system may depend on the answers to these two questions: Do they encourage segregation? Do they work toward breaking down the separation of church and state?

The following statement on the voucher system was issued on June 4, 1970, by AFT President Selden:

> We strongly protest the use of OEO funds to promote the so-called voucher system which would allow parents to choose the schools they wish to have their children attend. Although the voucher system is proposed as a progressive solution to the problems of education in slum and ghetto areas, it would bring more problems than it would solve. The voucher system introduces an element of hucksterism in education where promoters of private educational institutions would seek to induce parents to spend their vouchers with them rather than the public schools.

Furthermore, although the voucher system is proclaimed as an effort to surmount the racism in American education, it would, in fact, open the way to so-called freedom of choice principles, which under the guise of supporting religious sponsored schools actually permit wider spread racial discrimination both in the north and the south.

Finally, we protest the subterfuge inherent in having such an important educational development accomplished through the OEO back door rather than through the Office of Education. We view this development as another development of the Nixon administration's departure from sound educational principles. It could turn into a very costly and tragic mistake with far reaching social implications.

SUMMARY. This report could be called "From Verticalism to Vouchers and Back Again." Except it is no laughing matter. These are serious issues and, as those discussed in QuEST Paper #9, they are "a complex mixture of positive and negative features, some desirable and some very highly undesirable elements." It will be a difficult task to separate them out. But it must be done. Conflicts and contradictions need to be worked out. It is not the job of one person. It is the responsibility of local, state and national QuEST committees. It rests on the shoulders of the rank-and-file union teacher, the one who is most effected by these innovations. After all, they are the ones to be engineered, to be held accountable, to be classified, categorized and coded (and crucified?) on the vertical hierarchies. They are the ones who must decide their fate, not the Horace Mann's of business and industry who are inching, no bounding, their way into places where their right to be is questionable.

Of all the issues discussed, new-style merit pay, voucher systems, educational engineering, I believe the most ubiquitous is the concept of verticalism, for it deals with the gut issue of where *authority* and *decision making* rests. In an effort to provide more output for less input, the establishment of a vertical *class* system in education is imminent. In these times we live in, with threats of Agnew, Mitchell, and Wallace-type repression everywhere, class systems easily turn into *caste* systems. Your QuEST could prevent this from happening.

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